

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:**

Please replace Fig. 1 as shown in the attached replacement sheet of such figure. Fig. 1 is amended to show the two ends that form the connection site overlapping.

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-18 are pending. By this Amendment, Fig. 1 and claims 2, 17 and 18 are amended. Reconsideration and allowance in view of the above amendments and following arguments are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 1, 3 and 10-16 are allowed. Withdrawn claims 4-9, which depend from claim 1 indicated as allowable, should be reintroduced and also be in condition for allowance.

The drawings were objected to. Fig. 1 is replaced with new Fig. 1 which show features referred to in claims 2, 17 and 18. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph. Claims 2, 17 and 18 are amended to obviate the rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claim 2 is confusing and that it is unclear how two ends forming a connection site with one end inserted into the tube-like hollow end of another end can be 50% thinner than if the two ends were simply overlapped. As discussed in Applicant's specification at page 1, line 5 *et seq.* slings are woven from band fabrics that are finished off and fabricated in such a way that an endless loop results. These slings have the disadvantage that they must exhibit a great thickening at the site of the seam in order to achieve the required standard strengths. The woven fabrics must also be constructed and woven with very high strengths to compensate for the sewing loss at the site of the seam. Likewise, a certain width or thickness of the band material must be woven with a certain type of bond, coupled with the strength of the materials used

in weft and warp in order to achieve the required strengths. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims are allowable and the entire application is in condition for allowance.

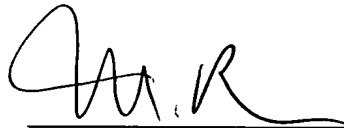
Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

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